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Lettie Prell
Director of Research

Curt Smith
Executive Assistant to the Director



Iowa Department of Corrections

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Pharmacy Pilot Project Showing Benefits

In 2013, released offenders with a mental illness were made eligible to obtain a free 60-day supply of behavioral health medications in addition to the 30-day supply already provided by the Department of Corrections. The Iowa Medication Voucher Program provided the funding, which allowed the DOC Central Pharmacy to dispense the approved medications to participating pharmacies in 95 counties.

For the year, 590 separate drug prescriptions were filled for 165 offenders. The average offender had 2.5 separate diagnoses of a chronic mental health condition. DOC, the University of Iowa College of Pharmacy, the Attorney General, and the Iowa Prescription Drug Corporation are collaborating on a study of offender outcomes. As the table below indicates, program participants had lower recidivism rates than a comparison group not participating in the medication voucher program.

Recidivism Rates: Central Pharmacy Program Behavioral Medication Program Participants vs. Non-Participants (First 90 Days After Prison Release)

Participant/Non-Participant Groups	Any New Charge	New Violent Charge	New Victimization Charge	Revoked**
Seriously Mentally Ill - Participants	6.3%	0.0%	2.5%	9.9%
Seriously Mentally Ill - Non-Participants	6.0%	1.6%	3.3%	12.7%
<i>Statistically significant differences</i>		*		
Other Chronic Mentally Ill - Participants	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.7%
Other Chronic Mentally Ill - Non-Participants	5.9%	1.5%	2.8%	11.3%
<i>Statistically significant differences</i>	*	*	*	*

*Statistically significant at the 95% confidence level

** Revocations are only reported for offenders receiving post-release supervision (non-discharges).

Source: Iowa Corrections Offender Network

The results above are very preliminary, and offenders will continue to be tracked in order to learn what the longer term effects of the program are on participating offenders. However, the preliminary results are encouraging, leading to a conclusion that access to needed medication may be one of many factors that contribute to successful reentry for mentally ill offenders.

The mission of the Iowa Department of Corrections is to:

Advance Successful Offender Reentry to Protect the Public, the Employees, and the Offenders from Victimization.